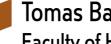# The Problem of Non-equivalence:
Possible Strategies for Dealing with It

Veronika Krejčí

Bachelor Thesis
2008

Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav jazyků
akademický rok: 2007/2008

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE
(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Veronika KREJČÍ**

Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Nulová ekvivalence: strategie, jak ji řešit v překladu.**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Cíl překladatele
Překladová ekvivalence
Úplná ekvivalence
Částečná ekvivalence
Nulová ekvivalence a způsoby, jak ji řešit v překladu
Příklady nulové ekvivalence a jejího řešení v překladu knihy Harry Potter

Rozsah práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Baker, Mona. In Other Words. A Coursebook on translation. London–New York:
Routledge, 1992.
Knittlová, Dagmar. K teorii i praxi překladu. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci,
2003.
Levý, Jiří. Umění překladu. Praha: Ivo Železný, 1998.
Rowling, Joanne K. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. London: Bloomsbury,
2000.
Rowlingová, Joanne K. Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců. Translated by Vladimír Medek.
Praha: Albatros, 2002.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Vlasta Vaculíková**
                                   Ústav jazyků

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **29. ledna 2008**
Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **30. května 2008**

Ve Zlíně dne 29. ledna 2008

L.S.

prof. PhDr. Vlastimil Švec, CSc.   Mgr. Věra Kozáková, Ph.D.
děkan   *ředitel ústavu*

ABSTRAKT

Teoretická část mojí bakalářské práce se zabývá problémem nulové ekvivalence a strategiemi, jak ji řešit v překladu. Jsou v ní vysvětleny různé druhy ekvivalence a překladatelské přístupy a metody.

Analytická část je složena z příkladů nulové ekvivalence a použitých překladatelských postupů. Je založena na srovnání anglicky psané knihy Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, kterou napsala J. K. Rowling (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), a jejího překladu do Čeština Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců, který vytvořil Vladimír Medek (Praha: Albatros, 2002).

Klíčová slova: překlad, překladatel, ekvivalence, nulová ekvivalence, protějšek, jazyk originálu, cílový jazyk, text, slovo

ABSTRACT

Theoretical part of my bachelor thesis deals with the issue of non-equivalence and possible strategies for dealing with it. It includes explanations of different types of equivalence as well as translational methods and approaches.

The second part, called Analysis, is composed of practical examples of non-equivalence and used translational strategies. It is based on the comparison of the English book Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, written by J. K. Rowling (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), and the translation of the book into Czech language Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců, made by Vladimír Medek (Praha: Albatros, 2002).

Keywords: translation, translator, equivalence, non-equivalence, counterpart, source language, target language, text, word

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

My bachelor thesis is concerned with the problem of non-equivalence and possible strategies for dealing with it. This topic is closely connected with the field of translation; so that, it includes translational approaches as well as methods and strategies used in translational process.

The first part of my bachelor thesis consists of theory. At the beginning, the aim of translation, including translator's objective and the process of translation, is discussed. The second chapter deals with the problem of equivalence, its types and their specific features. In the following chapters, kinds of lexical equivalence are described. Finally, the problem of non-equivalence is discussed in detail in the last chapter of theoretical part. There are introduced basic translational strategies as well as strategies used by professional translators, which are suitable for dealing with the problem of non-equivalence.

The second part, called Analysis, is based on the comparison of the English book Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, written by J. K. Rowling (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), and the translation of the book into Czech language Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců, made by Vladimír Medek (Praha: Albatros, 2002). It is composed of practical examples of non-equivalence taken from the book. Moreover, there are described translational strategies used by the translator and sometimes further suggestions for translation are added.

The aim of the thesis is to explain the problem of non-equivalence and to demonstrate practical examples. Furthermore, it is crucial to discuss methods and strategies, which were applied during the translational process of the above mentioned book, as it is done in the second part of my bachelor thesis.

I.   THEORY

1 TRANSLATOR'S OBJECTIVE

Translator's main objective is to mediate communication among people, no matter if the communication is in written or spoken form. Translator has to transfer a message to a recipient in such a way that the recipient can understand it. It is important to employ such devices which will convey the message in the same way as it was originally written. If not, the meaning of the message can be changed and the recipient would not understand the purpose of the message. This can lead to misunderstanding caused by misinterpretation of the message.

As Knittlová says, the main objective of the translator is to overcome barriers between different cultures. To achieve this aim translator usually employs the theory of translation, which is complex of translational approaches and branches and the connections between them, including the context of a given text or utterance.[1]

Additionally, according to Levý, the translator should be familiar with three basic issues; the source language, the target language and the pragmatic content.[2]

To explain this statement, the source language refers to the language in which the text was originally written and the target language is a term used for language into which the text is translated. The pragmatic content identifies broader context of the language of the original text, including its historical, cultural and local relationships and the particular style of the text.

1.1 Translation as a contact between languages

Translation is a contact between two different languages as well as between two different cultures. An expression in one language not always has the same meaning and the same cultural connotations as its counterpart in the other language. This can bring many problems to the translator, who has to overcome these barriers and transfer the message in suitable way for the recipient.

In accordance with Mounin's book, contact between two languages occurs when the same people are using both of them alternately. On the other hand, when a person uses both languages, we can speak about bilingualism. In this case there can appear some divergences from the standards typical for these two languages. These divergences are usually caused by the fact that the speaker is often influenced more by one language, usually the native

---

[1] Dagmar Knittlová, *K teorii i praxi překladu* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2003), 5.

[2] Jiří Levý, *Umění překladu* (Praha: Panorama, 1983), 15.

one, than the other and transfers the structures typical for his native language into the foreign language, which does not have to be always the best was how to translate. This leads to many mistakes and confusions in translation.[3]

1.2 Basic principle of translation

To avoid the confusions in translation mentioned above it is quite efficient to use some principles of translation, which have been already tested by another translator. There exist basic translational principles, which can be applied to the majority of typical problems occurring during translational process. Of course, translational principles were not the same all the time. From the very beginnings many approaches and strategies connected to translation changed and translational principles are still developing.

For many years the main translational problem was the question of equivalence. The most important was to transfer information from the source language into the target language regardless of grammatical differences. Nowadays, the main principle of translation consists in the functional approach and the functional equivalence. It is not important to use the same linguistic devices, but to make them fulfil the same function. Therefore, the linguistic devices should have the same denotative (focused on the matter-of-factness), connotative (focused on the content) and pragmatic (empirical) meaning.[4]

1.3 The process of translating

Until now translations were mostly examined and evaluated as a final product, but today there is more stress on the process of translating, which results in the final product. The theory of translation is now mainly focused on the cultural, historical and local context, author's relationship to the audience, kind of the text and its function. Then the translator targets details such as grammatical structure and lexical meaning of individual phrases.[5]

What is important in translation is not only the result in the form of translated text but the process consisting of several steps leading to the result. These steps are mostly based on the approaches to translation which are also connected with translational principles and strategies. Moreover, the result is absolutely dependent on these steps. If they are properly carried out, the result will also be satisfactory. However, if the translator prefers the result instead of focusing on the process, final translation can lose its original purpose.

---

[3] Georges Mounin, *Teoretické problémy překladu* (Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, 1999), 15-17.

[4] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 5-6.

[5] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 21.

According to Levý, it is possible to summarize the process of translating into three steps: understanding, interpretation and transfer of the original text into the target language.[6]

1.3.1 Understanding of the original text

The crucial step in achieving a good translation is to understand the original text. Without thorough understanding the text, translator usually makes many mistakes based on cultural background differences and differences connected with different treatment of particular expression, as a result of which the translation can lose its original purpose.

According to Knittlová it is not enough to understand words and structures in the original text. Translator needs to understand the aim of the text and its cultural background. In the case of translating technical texts the interpretation is much easier because of the terms and set expressions, which usually have the appropriate equivalent. However, when translating most of the common texts, the most important thing is its communicative function, especially when speaking about artistic translations.[7]

This idea is also supplemented by Jiří Levý, who claims that: "A good translator has to be mainly good reader."[8]

The process of understanding the aim of the text can be divided into several steps. The first step is to understand the text philologically. This does not demand any special talent; it is just the question of professional preparation and experience with the particular language. The second step is comprehension of the emotional flavour of the text and correct interpretation of it. And the last, most difficult step is to understand the author's objective. This involves for example characters, their relationships or location of the story. In this process it is necessary to employ translator's imagination.[9]

1.3.2 Interpretation of the original text

The second step of the translational process is interpretation of the original text, which is not less important than the first step mentioned above.

In accordance with the book written by Jiří Levý, it is not enough to transfer the original text into the target language grammatically. The translator needs to understand the

---

[6] See Levý, *Umění překladu*, 51.

[7] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 27.

[8] See Levý, *Umění překladu*, 52.

[9] See Levý, *Umění překladu*, 52-56.

original text, so that he can transfer it into the target language with regard to the purpose of the text. It will often happen that the target language has different pragmatic and stylistic devices than the original one. Due to this fact, translator has to specify the particular expression and choose the right equivalent.[10]

1.3.3   Transferring the text into the target language

The last step of the process of translation, which was stated in Levý's book, is transfer of the text into the target language.

As was already said, it is necessary to transfer the original text into the target language with respect to its objective. What usually causes difficulties is the difference between two particular languages. The biggest problem is when the language devices of the two languages are not semantically equivalent. Then, the translator has to find a corresponding expression in the target language. To achieve this, he/she needs to employ not only stylistic devices but also his imagination and experience.[11]

1.4   Traditional methods used in translating

From the above mentioned it is clear that the work of a translator is very hard and demanding. There can appear many difficulties and inadequacies during the process of translating. However, a translator has to know how to deal with them. To solve these problems translator can apply traditional methods used in translating.

Here are some of them, preceded by Knittlová:

- Equivalence – absolutely corresponding counterparts.
- Calque – word for word translation.
- Substitution – language unit replaced by another, grammatically different unit.
- Transposition – grammatical change caused by differences between two systems of language.
- Modulation – change of aspect (point-of-view).
- Adaptation – substitution by another more adequate situation (*proverbs, sayings, idioms, etc.*).
- Explicitness – addition of explanation.[12]

---

[10] See Levý, *Umění překladu*, 57-66.

[11] See Levý, *Umění překladu*, 67-81.

[12] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 14-15.

This list of methods used in translation is just a brief overview. There are many more methods and strategies, which can be applied during translation. However, these will be mentioned and explained hereinafter.

2 EQIVALENCE

The problem of equivalence is one of the most important issues in the field of translating. It is a question of finding suitable counterparts in target language for expressions in the source language.

Translator has to be aware of all types of equivalence. The best known kind is the lexical equivalence concerning change of lexical unit from the source language into the target language.[13]

However, there are also other types of equivalence, such as grammatical equivalence, pragmatic equivalence and equivalence on the textual level, which are necessary for connectedness of the text and its logical structure.

2.1 Textual equivalence

Equivalence on the textual level is related to the organization of the text, its informational structure, coherence and cohesion. Translator needs to distinguish between new information (rheme) and the already known information (theme). His task is also to emphasise the rheme in the translated text. When translating into Czech theme is usually situated at the beginning of the sentence and rheme at the end. In the English sentence it is not always that way. Sometimes, the English sentence has the same structure as in the Czech language, but sometimes, word order can be changed, for instance by cleft and pseudo-cleft structures. [14]

2.1.1 Coherence

Coherence is defined as set of relations organizing and forming the text, as stated in the Knittlová's book. It is mostly subjective and can be gathered from the text.[15]

In accordance with Mona Baker's book, coherence is not objective, because it is absolutely dependent on the reader and his evaluation of the text. "Coherence is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text."[16]

---

[13] Zlata Kufnerová, Milena Poláčková, Jaromír Povějšil, Zdena Skoumalová and Vlasta Straková, *Překládání a čeština* (Praha: H&H, 1994), 13.

[14] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 96-98.

[15] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 99.

[16] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 218.

2.1.2 Cohesion

According to Knittlová, cohesion plays not a less important role than coherence in translating, because it contributes to better comprehension of the text. Cohesion ties parts of the text together lexically and grammatically.[17]

In compliance with Mona Baker, cohesion is objective and based on the principle of automatic recognition, in contrast to coherence that is more depended on the reader's attitude. Cohesion connects words and expressions with their counterparts in the text. Baker says that cohesion is the surface expression of coherence relations and calls it a device for making conceptual relations explicit.[18]

The translator's awareness of the fact that there exist cohesive devices in the source language contributes to better understanding of the text as well as to proper translation.

According to Knittlová it is possible to distinguish between five main cohesive devices:

- Reference – there are two types of reference, anaphoric and cataphoric. The former refers to an expression used earlier in the text, it refers backwards; the later refers to another expression mentioned in the following part of the text (cataphora). Into Czech references are usually translated by demonstrative and possessive pronouns or by lexical repetition.

- Substitution – one unit is replaced by a substitutive unit (*do, one, and the same*). It is not a typical mean of cohesion in Czech language.

- Ellipsis – omission of a part of a sentence. Usually no problems are caused by ellipsis when translating into Czech.

- Connectors – linking devices (conjunctions, conjuncts and other) joining sentences and paragraphs together. Markers of logical sequence and links in the text.

- Lexical cohesion – repetition of a lexical unit by using synonyms, hyponyms, paraphrases, etc.[19]

Coherence and cohesion are both terms connected with textual and pragmatic equivalence; however, they do not have the same function. A highly coherent text does not have to be

---

[17] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 199.

[18] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 218.

[19] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 101-103.

cohesive at the same time. For instance, timetable is a highly coherent text, because it has its underlying logical structure which everybody understands. Nevertheless, it has no signs of cohesion such as linking devices, references, etc. That is why it is important to understand the difference between these two terms and to know how to use them properly.

2.2 Pragmatic equivalence

Another aspect closely connected with textual equivalence is pragmatic equivalence.

According to Mona Baker, "Pragmatics is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation."[20]

This means that pragmatic equivalence deals more with the reader's attitude than with theoretical issues and that it emphasises value of the text including its cultural and emotional connotations.

2.3 Grammatical equivalence

Grammatical equivalence is a more specific issue than equivalence on the textual level, which has already been explained.

According to Knittlová, it is worth to look at grammatical equivalence from two points of view:

- Morphological point of view
- Syntactical point of view

2.3.1 From the morphological point of view

The first point of view by means of which grammatical equivalence can be evaluated is the morphological point of view.

Translator has to deal with differences between the systems of Czech and English language. From the morphological point of view there occur problems related to countable and uncountable nouns, grammatical categories and treatment of a person, time and aspect of a verb. The question of salutation can also cause difficulties, because English does not deal with this issue in the same way as Czech does. Moreover, there can be problem how to translate particular tenses from English into Czech, because Czech language does not have

---

[20] Mona Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (London-New York: Rutledge, 1992), 217-218.

as wide range of tenses as English. Finally, passive voice is usually transferred into active when translating into Czech. [21]

2.3.2   From the syntactical point of view

According to Knittlová, grammatical equivalence from the syntactical point of view is much more difficult issue. In this field, translator has to solve problems connected with different word order and condensers such as infinitives, gerunds and participles. These are usually translated by the subordinate clauses with particular linking devices, providing that cohesion of the text will be preserved. [22]

2.4   Lexical equivalence

The last and the most specific type of equivalence mentioned in this chapter is lexical equivalence.

According to Mona Baker, lexical equivalence deals with problems arising from lack of equivalence at word level. This type of equivalence is based on understanding the lexical meaning of a word or lexical unit and enables the translator to find the best counterparts in target language.[23]

When comparing lexical units of different languages, we can find many semantic differences concerning their denotative and pragmatic meaning. Denotative inadequacies can be caused by various approaches to naming of particular expressions, by different treatment of abstractness and different points of view when describing reality. However, the biggest differences can be found in the field of connotative meaning. It is important to distinguish between literary and non-literary language, common vocabulary and terms and to take account of particular style. In the field of lexical equivalence can be distinguished three types of counterparts, as mentioned in the Knittlová's book:

- Absolute equivalence
- Partial equivalence
- Non-equivalence [24]

---

[21] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 92-94.

[22] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 94-95.

[23] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 10-12.

[24] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 33.

All types of equivalence occur in the process of translation. Some of them more frequently and others are not so common; however, it is absolutely necessary for the translator to be aware of them and to know how to use them in translation in order to avoid misinterpretation. Each of these three kinds of equivalence will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

3   ABSOLUTE EQUIVALENCE

Obviously, absolute equivalence is the best possibility which can occur during translational process. Translator can easily choose one of the suitable counterparts in the target language and use it in translation instead of a particular expression from the source language. However, there are some rules which should be obeyed when employing this type of equivalence.

According to Knittlová, when two counterparts in a particular communicative situation have the same contextual meaning and stylistic function, i.e. they have the same denotative and connotative components; we can say they are absolutely equivalent. Denotative units of basic word stock form an essential part of this type of equivalence. Absolute equivalents are usually symmetric also from the formal point of view. This means that the counterpart is either one word or compound word depending on the form of the original expression. Words with more equivalents also belong to the field of absolute equivalence. These words are usually defined by the context, whether grammatical, lexical, situational or pragmatic. As mentioned by Knittlová, the most common types of absolute equivalents are:

- Substantives – form the biggest part of the total amount of absolute equivalents. Usually stand for people, parts of body, things, animals, time, abstract things connected with a person, etc.

- Verbs – form the minor part of the total amount of absolute equivalents. It is necessary to take account of the fact that the Czech verb contains more information and has broader semantic meaning than the English verb. This is related to the nominal character of the English language and the verbal character of the Czech language. A translator should use various types of expressions when translating into Czech.

- Adjectives – usually represent objective quality, e.g.: colour, size, length, etc.

- Adverbs – usually the type connected with place.[25]

---

[25] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 33-35.

4 PARTIAL EQUIVALENCE

Partial equivalence means that the equivalent used in translation is not an absolute counterpart to the original expression; however, it fulfils the same function and tends to preserve the same meaning in the same context as the source language expression does.

Partial equivalents form the major part of total amount of equivalents in contrast with absolute equivalents, which are not so common. This is caused by differences between Czech and English language, which are not only typologically different but also culturally, historically, socially and geographically inadequate. Partial equivalence deals with problems such as formal differences, differences in denotative and connotative meaning and pragmatic differences. These differences rarely appear separately but very often in combinations of two or more types.[26]

All of the following differences are important issues for every translator. They can cause many difficulties when translating; however, being well-informed about their functions and strategies can make the translator's work easier.

4.1 Formal differences

The first aspect causing partial equivalence is a formal difference. This type usually involves differences in form of a particular expression, which is transferred from the original text to the target language.

According to Knittlová, there are two main problematical issues connected with the field of formal differences. First problem is the question of compound terms vs. one-word terms. She claims that English is more analytical than Czech and therefore contains more compound terms. Consequently, English language is also more explicit. This means that it contains bigger amount of information in a sentence, which has declarative and explicatory function. Another formal difference between Czech and English can be found in noun phrases, typical for English, and prepositional phrases. Usually, an English noun phrase is translated into Czech with the help of a preposition inserted into an expression. The prepositional phrase bears additional information, which is a sign of explicitness. And that is why an English compound term is difficult to translate into Czech.[27]

---

[26] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 35.

[27] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 36-41.

4.2 Differences in denotative meaning

The second problem of partial equivalence is a semantic difference in denotative meaning. There are several aspects causing these types of differences.

Consistent with Knittlová's book, these differences are mainly caused by different treatment of reality, different level of abstraction and different approach to naming in two languages. Nevertheless, the particular fact remains the same or at least fulfills the same function. The most common semantic differences are:

- Specification – substitution of a word by its hyponym (more specific expression). The particular equivalent contains an extra semantic unit.

- Generalization – substitution of hyperonym (more general expression). One of the semantic units is restrained; the level of abstraction is intensified. Generalization is not as common as specification.[28]

4.3 Differences in connotative meaning

Partial equivalence can sometimes be caused by differences in connotative meaning. Of course, it has its reasons, which will be explained hereinafter.

As Knittlová claims, the majority of words are connotatively neutral; however, sometimes the connotative components become more important than the denotative units of particular expression. And that is why differences in connotative meaning arise. It is possible to distinguish between two types, expressive and stylistic differences. Expressivity can be explained as intensifier of language unit and its influence on recipient and its level of emotionality. On the other hand, stylistic differences are connected with versions of language such as archaic and poetic word or slang and vulgarisms on the other side.[29]

4.4 Pragmatic differences

Pragmatic difference is another reason causing partial equivalence. This type of difference involves inadequacies connected not only with the language but also with other aspects such as cultural or situational background.

There are many methods, shown in Knittlová's book, how to solve problems connected with pragmatic differences, such as adding of information, omission of

---

[28] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 41-53.

[29] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 55-56.

information, analogy (clichés, set phrases, salutations, etc.) and transcription containing an explicit information.[30]

Pragmatic differences are also important when solving problems connected with more equivalents and with non-equivalence, which will be explained in the next chapter.

---

[30] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 81-84.

5   NON-EQUIVALENCE

As it was already mentioned above the problem of non-equivalence in translation occurs when there is no suitable counterpart in the target language. It is not possible to use devices either of absolute equivalence neither of partial equivalence and translator has to deal with the problem in other way.

According to Mona Baker, there are more kinds of non-equivalence influenced by variety of factors. These factors can be either linguistic, such as collocations and idioms, or extra-linguistic related to problems of coherence and cohesion mentioned above. In connection with this, Baker distinguishes between non-equivalence at word level and non-equivalence above word level. She also suggests some strategies which can help the translator to deal with this kind of problems.[31]

5.1   Non-equivalence at word level

At first it is important to distinguish between non-equivalence at word level and non-equivalence above word level.

According to Mona Baker, translator dealing with non-equivalence above word level solves problems connected mainly with **collocations, idioms and fixed expressions**. However, non-equivalence at word level means that the translator cannot find a suitable equivalent in the target language for **a word** used in the original text. There are many different types of non-equivalence requiring different strategies for dealing with them. The following are the most common cases of non-equivalence at word level as they were stated in Baker's book:

- Culture-specific concepts
- The original language concept is not lexicalized in the target language
- The original language word is semantically complex
- The original and target languages make different distinctions in meaning
- The target language lacks a superordinate word
- The target language lacks a specific term (hyponym)
- Languages are different in physical or interpersonal prospective
- Languages are different in expressive meaning
- Languages are different in form

---

[31] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 17-18.

- Languages are different in frequency and purpose of using specific form
- The use of loan words in the original text[32]

5.2 Basic translational strategies

When translator encounters the problem of non-equivalence, he has to decide how to deal with it in order to preserve the same meaning and function of the translated expression. To reach this aim, there exist translational strategies, which can be applied. However, not every translational strategy is acceptable for solving problems arising from non-equivalence.

According to Knittlová, basic translational strategies suitable for dealing with the problem of non-equivalence are these:

- Acceptance of a foreign expression
- Adaptation of a foreign expression into Czech
- Substitution by an analogy
- Generalization
- Calque
- Omission[33]

5.3 Strategies used by professional translators

As was already mentioned, translator should use his own experience and imagination when he/she is translating a text. However, during the process of translating it is usually helpful to follow some of those translational strategies, which have been already used and consequently tested by other, more experienced translators. Following sub-chapters represent particular strategies used by professional translators.

5.3.1 Translation by a more general word

According to Mona Baker, this type is one of the most common translational strategies and can be used for solving problems with the most types of non-equivalence in majority of languages, especially in the area of propositional meaning. It is used more general word (superordinate word) in translation, which is more specific than the word used in the

---

[32] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 20-26.

[33] See Knittlová, *K teorii I praxi překladu,* 84-85.

original text. The superordinate word's function is to overcome a lack of specificity in the target language.[34]

5.3.2 Translation by a more neutral word

Second type of translational strategy, which is commonly used by experienced translators, is translation by a more neutral word.

This type of translational strategy consists in using more neutral word (less expressive word) in the target language. The strategy is usually employed in order to avoid confusion and embarrassment, which could occur thanks to the more expressive word used in the source language.[35]

5.3.3 Translation by cultural substitution

The point of this strategy is that a culturally specific expression in the source language is replaced by an expression in the target language, which is more likely to be accepted by the target reader in spite of the fact that it does not have the same propositional meaning. Mona Baker sees the biggest advantage of this strategy in the possibility of giving the reader a concept, which he/she can easily identify with.[36]

5.3.4 Translation using a loan word

This is another strategy dealing with the culturally specific context. A loan word accompanied by its explanation is used in the target language. After the loan word has been once explained, it can be then used on its own, without further explanation, because the reader already understands the meaning of the word. The explanation of the loan word is usually based on using more general (superordinate) word.[37]

5.3.5 Translation by paraphrase

Another type of strategy suitable for dealing with non-equivalence is translation by paraphrase.

According to Mona Baker, this strategy can be divided into two parts depending on a word used in the paraphrase:

- Translation by paraphrase using a related word

---

[34] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 26-28.

[35] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 28-31.

[36] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 31-34.

[37] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 34-36.

- Translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word

Translation by paraphrase using a related word is a strategy which is used when the concept of the original text is lexicalized in the target language differently in its form or when the frequency with which a particular expression is used in the source language is higher than natural. On the other hand, translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word tends to be used when an expression in the source language is not lexicalized at all. Instead of a related word there can be used a modified superordinate word or the paraphrase can be based on unpacking the meaning of the original expression.[38]

Translation by paraphrase as a kind of translational strategy is a little bit controversial. Of course, it has its advantages as well as disadvantages. However, compared with other strategies its disadvantages are quite serious.

According to Mona Baker, the biggest advantage of this strategy consists in achieving high level of accuracy in specifying propositional meaning. Nevertheless, there is a big disadvantage consisting in the fact that a paraphrase does not have the status of a lexical unit. This means that it cannot transmit expressive, evoked or other associative meaning, because these types of meaning are connected only with stable lexical units, which are supported by their history of recurrence in the particular context. Another disadvantage is that paraphrase is absolutely unpractical, because it fills a unit with an additional explanation, which consists of several further units.[39]

5.3.6 Translation by omission

The last strategy stated in Baker's book is translation by omission. As it is clear from the title, this strategy is based on ellipses (omissions of a word or lexical unit).

According to Baker, this strategy is not harmful at all and to omit translating a word or expression can be sometimes useful, especially if the meaning of the particular expression is not vital for further development of the text. She explains that it is not necessary to disturb the reader by inadequately long explanation and it is better to simply omit translating the word.[40]

The statement mentioned above can be useful; however, it is important to distinguish between expressions which can be omitted and those which are crucial to retain in the text.

---

[38] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 36-40.

[39] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 40.

[40] See Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation,* 40-41.

II. ANALYSIS

6 EXAMPLES OF NON-EQUIVALENCE

This part is based on the comparison of the English book called Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, written by J. K. Rowling (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), and its translation into Czech language Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců, made by Vladimír Medek (Praha: Albatros, 2002). Not only examples of non-equivalence but also applied translational strategies will be explained and further suggestions how the particular expression can be translated will be mentioned in this chapter.

Examples of non-equivalence can be divided into two basic categories, as it was explained in the theoretical part, chapter no. 5.1:

- Non-equivalence at word level
- Non-equivalence above word level

6.1 Non-equivalence at word level

In this chapter there are shown examples from the book, which do not have a suitable equivalent for a word unit in the target language (Czech). Not always it is only one word expression but there are also expressions consisting of two or more word closely linked together, such as names and surnames, names of places, etc.

It is possible to divide examples of non-equivalence at word level into two categories:

- Untranslatable expressions
- Expressions without counterparts

6.1.1 Untranslatable expressions

In the original English book, there are many special expressions which do not have suitable counterparts in Czech language. This means that it is not possible to translate these expressions by applying typical translational methods and strategies. However, the fact that the source language text contains untranslatable expressions does not have to mean that the whole text cannot be translated. Because of that, Vladimír Medek invented completely new words and expressions, which did not exist before in Czech language, to replace this type of non-equivalence. These expressions are invented with regard to the original words and the context and cultural background of the story.

This category contains examples of names of places, people, things, and names of institutions, newspapers and other cultural-specific concepts.

Names of places

Names of places mentioned in the following table of examples do not have its counterparts in Czech language. Therefore, completely new words were invented to solve this problem.

In some cases, the new word was developed from the meaning of the root of the original expression. For example, *Raven* means *havran* in Czech, so that *Ravenclaw* was translated as *Havraspár.* The semantic meaning of the root of the original expression was preserved and therefore a new word was invented.

However, sometimes it was not possible to translate in such a way that was mentioned above. Thus, the translator took account of the emotional colouring of the particular expression and invented a word lexically independent of the original expression, but still having similar meaning and similar level of emotional colouring.

This can be illustrated with this example: *Little Whinging* was translated as *Kvikálkov*, because the translator considered the emotional colouring of the word little and invented a word in Czech language, which carries similar emotional load.

Another example of the above mentioned statement is *Slytherin*, which was translated as *Zmijozel*. The translation is based on the root *sly – slizký*. In Czech there is commonly used prase *slizký jako had/zmije,* from which the translation *Zmijozel* was developed.

Table of Examples No. 1

Original expression	Translation
Little Whinging	Kvikálkov
Hogwarts	Bradavice
Hogwarts School OF Witchcraft and Wizardy	Škola čar a kouzel v Bradavicích
Eeylops Owl Emporium	Velkoprodejna Mžourov
Names of school houses:	
Slytherin	Zmijozel
Hufflepuff	Mrzimor
Gryffindor	Nebelvír
Ravenclaw	Havraspár

Names of people, things and cultural events

This category is very similar to the above mentioned one. The point of the problem is in the fact that the source language word (English expression) is not lexicalized in the target language (Czech expression).

To solve this problem the translator used similar method as in the previous category. He either invented a word on the base of the meaning of the root of the source language expression, such a *Remembrall – Pamatováček,* or he made up completely new word, such as *Camrál.*

In spite of the fact, that the translator invented completely new words in Czech language to replace original expressions in English, he preserved propositional meaning of the original expressions. This can be demonstrated on the following example. The propositional meaning of *muggles* is "ordinary people, who are not connected with wizardry". So that, the translator kept this propositional meaning also in its new Czech counterpart *mudlové.*

Table of Examples No. 2

Original expression	Translation
Muggles (people)	Mudlové
Quidditch (a game)	Famfrpál
The equipment needed for Quidditch:	
The Quaffle (a ball)	Camrál
The Bludgers (a ball)	Potlouky
The Golden Snitch (a ball)	Zlatonka
Cleansweep Seven (a broomstick)	Zameták Sedm
Other expressions:	
Chf. Warlock	Nejvyšší divotvorce
Knuts (currency)	Svrčky
Remembrall	Pamatováček

6.1.2   Expressions without counterparts

In this chapter there are examples of expressions, which do not have their counterpart in the target language (Czech); however, they can be translated by some of the translational methods, mostly by adaptation or calque.

In some cases, translator's suggestion for translation is based on the root of the word and its meaning, which is transferred into the newly coined word in the target language.

This category includes translations of names, surnames and titles of the characters, names of animals, places and things, names of traditional food, interjections and colloquial vocabulary.

Names of the characters

In the translation of the original book, the names of the main characters are usually not translated, such as *Harry Potter* or *Ron Weasley*, which can be seen in the beginning of the table of examples. Only surnames of female characters are adopted into Czech language by adding the ending *"-ová"*, as with *Hermiona Grangerová*.

Other change occurs when the translator transfers emotionally coloured expression *Ronnienkins* into *Ronánek*, which you can see in the following list of examples, with regard to its original connotative meaning.

Nevertheless, some names, especially surnames, are expressed in the Czech language by fictional expressions invented by the translator. They are mostly invented from the meaning of the root of the original word, such as *Fudge – Popletal*, or by calque, which is word-for-word translation, such as *Diggle – Kopál*. These names are listed at the bottom part of the following table.

Table of Examples No. 3

Original expression	Translation
Harry Potterr	Harry Potter
Hermione Granger	Hermiona Grangerová
Ron Weasley	Ron Weasley
Ronnienkins	Ronánek
Hagrid	Hagrid
Albus Dumbledore	Albus Brumbál
Cornelius Fudge	Kornelius Popletal
Dedalus Diggle	Dedalus Kopál
Professor Sprout	Profesorka Prýtová
Professor Flitwick	Professor Kratiknot

Surnames and titles

Most of the surnames, mentioned in the book, are adapted into Czech language by adding a suitable ending. If it is a male surname, the original expression remains the same, only the title before the name is translated. However, if it is a female name, the typical ending for Czech language *"-ová"* is added.

In particular, the most interesting is the translation of the title *"Sir"*, which is usually translated as *"pan"*; however in this case, the translator preferred the expression *"rytíř"*, which correspond with the cultural and historical background of the story.

Examples of the above mentioned statements can be seen in the following table.

Table of Examples No. 4

Original expression	Translation
Mr and Mrs Dursley	Pan a paní Dursleyovi
Mrs Potter	Paní Potterová
Mr Potter	Pan Potter
Madam Pomfrey	madam Pomfreyová
Sir Nicholas de Mimsy	Rytíř Nicholas de Mimsy

Names of animals

Into this category belong names of animals and ghosts. Some of them were translated by adaptation, e.g.: *Hedwig – Hedvika*. Others were translated by calque, such as the name of a dog *Fang – Tesák*. In some cases, the meaning of the root of the source language word was used for translation, as with *Scabbers – Prašivka*.

Table of Examples No. 5

Original expression	Translation
Hedwig (Harry's owl)	Hedvika
Scabbers (Ron's owl)	Prašivka
Peeves (a ghost)	Protiva
Fang (a dog)	Tesák
Fluffy (a dog)	Chloupek

Names of places

Names of places, which were translated from the original book, were translated mostly by adaptation and calque. These names usually consist of two words. It is not difficult to translate the second part of the name, because these general expressions usually have their counterparts in Czech language, such as *drive, alley – ulice, forest – les, room – pokoj, síň, místnost*. However, it is more problematical to translate the first part of the name. The most common methods in this case were adaptation and calque as it is possible to see in the following table of examples.

Table of Examples No. 6

Original expression	Translation

Privet Drive	Zobí ulice
Diagon Alley	Příčná ulice
The Forbidden Forest	Zapovězený les
The Trophy Room	Pamětní síň

Names of things

Into this category belong names of things, magic formulae, spells and cultural events.

Names of things were mostly translated by calque. For instance, the name of newspaper was also translated by word for word translation, though, it could be also left as it was and the English expression could be adopted into Czech language.

The method of generalization was also used, as with *the Sorting Hat*, which was translated as *Moudrý klobouk* instead of word-for-word translation, which would be *Řešící klobouk*.

On the contrary, names for abstract things, such as spells and magic formulae were not translated and the original expressions were adopted into Czech, because they sound like magic formulae in Czech as well.

Next problem was caused by names for cultural events, such as *Hallowe'en*, which was translated by an analogy, as it is shown in the following table of examples.

Table of Examples No. 7

Original expression	**Translation**
Things:	
The Sorting Hat	Moudrý klobouk
The Daily Prophet (newspaper)	Denní věštec
Leq-Locker Course	Svěrací kouzlo
Posts in the game called Quidditch:	
Seeker	Chytač
Beater	Odrážeč
Chaser	Střelec
Keeper	Brankář
Spells and magic formulae:	
Alohomora!	Alohomora!
Wingardium leviosa!	Wingardium leviosa!
Locomotor mortis	Locomotor mortis
Cultural events:	
Hallowe'en	Předvečer Všech Svatých
The Sorting Ceremony	Slavnostní Zařazování

Food

Name of food is culture-specific concept, which is very difficult to translate. Translator has to know exactly what the particular expression means. Furthermore, he needs to be informed about what it consists of and when or where it is usually eaten. Then, he can explain the expression by additional, explicit information, as with *turkey sandwiches* and *stoat sandwiches* at the bottom of the table of examples. This explicitness also helps him to find or invent suitable translation, such as *griliášová hrudka* for *rock cake.*

Table of Examples No. 8

Original expression	Translation
Yorkshire pudding	Vaječný svítek
Rice pudding	Rýžový nákyp
Rock cake	Griliášová hrudka
Steak-and-kidney pie	Masový a ledvinkový pudink
Baking pumpkin	Dýňový koláč
Crumpets	Koláčky, teplé chlebové palačinky
Marshmallows	Ibiškové pokroutky
Home-made fudge	Domácí fondované cukroví
Turkey sandwiches	Chlebíčky s krocanem
Stoat sandwiches	Chlebíčky s kolčavím masem
Trifle	Piškot se smetanou

Interjections

This is a special category consisting of translations of interjections, which are used in English language more than in Czech.

It is interesting that the sounds and emotionally coloured, spontaneous exclamations have different form in Czech than in English language. Their expressive meaning is very similar in spite of the obvious differences in spelling and pronunciation.

Table of Examples No. 9

Original expression	Translation
SMASH!	KŘŘACH!
Tap. Tap. Tap.	Ťuk, ťuk.
Um	Ehm
"Mm?"	„Copak?"

"Blimey"	„Mordyjé"
Tut, tut	Ale, ale
WHAM	ŽUCH
"Urgh-…	„No fuj …
OUCH	AU-AU

Colloquial vocabulary

In the translation of the original book, translator had to deal also with colloquial vocabulary in different levels of expressivity. Most of them were neutral or slightly expressive as you can see in the following table of examples. However, the level of expressivity in other cases was a little bit higher, as with expression *bunch of dunderheads*, which was translated as *stádo tupohlavců*.

Sometimes, the level of expressivity or the expressive meaning of the translated word is intensified or weakened by the used target word. However, the translator tried to preserve the same or at least similar level of expressivity, which was obvious from the context.

For example, *the great lump* can be translated into Czech by many expressions with different expressive meaning. Nevertheless, Medek's translation *nekňuba* is absolutely adequate to the context as well as to the target reader, who can be children as well.

Table of Examples No. 10

Original expression	**Translation**
Conk	Frňák
Bunch of dunderheads	Stádo tupohlavců
The great lump	Nekňuba
Bogies	Holuby z nosu

6.2 Non-equivalence above word level

In this type of non-equivalence not only a single word is translated. However, the translator has to deal with a broader unit such as group of words, whole sentence or sequence of sentences. To be more specific this category contains for instance collocations, idioms, metaphors and fixed phrases.

When dealing with non-equivalence above word level it is important to take account of pragmatic aspect of the text, its coherence and cohesion and preserve them to avoid misinterpretation.

As it is obvious from the following list of examples, the Czech translation is mostly longer and more explicit than the original English expression. This is caused by the fact that some of the source text units need to be explained. For example, as with the noun phrases ...*owl-free morning* and ...*blood-curdling shriek*... which were translated into Czech by a subordinate clause. This can also be cause by the fact that English sentence often lacks a verb, which needs to be added in the Czech translation, as in the first two examples mentioned in the following table.

Table of Examples No. 11

Original expression	Translation
"Little tyke"	Máme to ale nezbedu.
People in cloaks.	Měli na sobě dlouhé pláště.
…owl-free morning	…zcela normální ráno, do kterého mu žádné sovy nezasahovaly.
"Up! Get up! Now!"	„Vstávat! Vstávat! Hajdy z postele!"
Harry's head was swimming.	Harrymu se točila hlava.
"Barking."	„Taková šílenost."
Harry's heart gave a horrible jolt.	Harrymu se sevřelo srdce.
You have been warned.	Berte to jako první a poslední varování.
…with Crabble and Goyle behind him.	…s Crabbem a Goylem v patách.
Blood was pounding in his ears.	Krev mu bušila ve spáncích.
See you.	Tak nashle!
"You've got some nerve-"	„Tak drzou holku jsem ještě neviděl,"
"He's late, maybe he's chickened out,"	„Má zpodění, nejspíš si nadělal do kalhot,"
"You don't use your eyes, …	…pro oči nevidíte…
…Follow me?"	…Budeš si to pamatovat?"
… - any questions?"	… - chceš se na něco zeptat?"
"I'll get him,"	„S ním si to vyřídím,"
…the sight gave him the creeps.	…běhal mu při tom pohledu mráz po zádech.
…blood-curdling shriek…	…zaječení, při kterém Harrymu stydla krev v žilách…
"Will you stop messing around!"	„Nechte už konečně těch šaškáren!"
"He lost his marbles,"	„Docela mu přeskočilo,"

Stammering

Other interesting phenomenon found in the book is stammering. To translate this problem the translator chose very similar form as in the source language expression; however, he adopted it into Czech language and doubled such consonants to make it sound natural in the target language.

Table of Examples No. 12

Original expression	Translation
"…d-don't know why you wanted t-t-to meet here of all p-places, …"	„…n-nevím, p-proč jste ch-chtěl, abychom se sešli p-právě tady, …"

Colloquial expressions

This category dealing with colloquial expressions above word level is very similar to the above mentioned chapter dealing with colloquial vocabulary at the word level with the difference that here are shown whole sentences or at least their parts. Nevertheless, the principle of preserving the level of expressivity remains the same. However, sometimes it is applied compensation in place, which means that the translated expression is used on different place than the original expression was.

It is clear, that English language has fewer expressive means than Czech, and that is why an English expression is sometimes translated in two ways, such as *shut up* in the following list of examples.

Table of Examples No. 13

Original expression	Translation
"Idiot boy!"	„Vrtáku jeden!"
…can turn very nasty.	…umí být pěkný parchant.
"that old git"	„ten syčák starej"
"Shut up, Malfoy,"	„Zavři zobák, Malfoyi,"
"Shut up, both of you!"	„Kušte, oba dva!"
"Oy, pea-brain!"	„Nech toho, ty hlavo skopová!"
…to tell them off…	…aby je vypeskoval.
"Blasted thing,"	„Aby to čert vzal,"
"- your little bit of hocus pocus.	„…pár těch vašich kejklů.

Idioms and metaphors

Idioms and metaphors cannot be translated by word-for-word translation, because they would lose their pragmatic meaning and the translation of the particular expression would not make sense. It is necessary to find a phrase which is commonly used in the target language and has the same or similar connotations for the Czech reader. Usually the Czech expression expressed by the means of metaphor is more explicit, as it can be seen in the following table of examples.

Table of Examples No. 14

Original expression	Translation
Metaphors:	
Mr Dursey stopped dead.	Pan Dursey zůstal stát, jako když do něj hrom uhodí.
Mr Dursey stood rooted to the spot.	Pan Dursey zůstal stát, jako by ho někdo přibil.
Under a tuft of jet-black hair…	Pod čupřinou vlasů černých jako uhel, …
A wild looking old woman…	…nějaká stařena, která vypadala, jako by byla z divokých vajec.
Neville went bright red	Seville zrudl jako krocan
Idioms:	
Bless my soul.	Pro boha živého.
…his spirits were low.	…cítil se pod psa.

Poetry

Other field where non-equivalence can be found is poetry. When translating poetry it is important to preserve its original rhyme and rhythm, if it is possible.

In the following example the translator preserved its original rhyme, so that each two consecutive lines rhyme like in the original text. Moreover, the translator used archaic words, such as *"leč"* and *"viz"*, in order to stay close to the style of the original.

What is changed is the form and punctuation. In the original text, the whole poem is one sentence; however, in the Czech translation there are three sentences made by Vladimír Medek.

Table of Examples No. 15

Original expression	Translation

Enter, stranger, but take heed	Vstup, cizinče, leč pamatuj:
Of what awaits the sin of greed,	poklad, jenž nikdy nebyl tvůj,
For those who take, but do not earn,	hledáš-li v našich sklepeních,
Must pay most dearly in their turn,	životem odpykáš svůj hřích.
So if you seek beneath our floors,	Koho by zlákal cizí skvost,
A treasure that was never yours,	zaplatí za svou hrabivost.
Thief, you have been warned, beware	Zloději, viz ty pevné zdi:
Of finding more than treasure there.	najdeš tam víc než poklady.

CONCLUSION

The aim of my bachelor thesis was to explain the problem of non-equivalence theoretically and to demonstrate translational methods and strategies used in the book Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců, written by Vladimír Medek (Praha: Albatros, 2002), which is the translation of the English book Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, written by J. K. Rowling (London: Bloomsbury, 2000).

The theory is explained in the first part of the thesis. It begins with the theory of translation and over the problem of equivalence the work comes to the point of non-equivalence. In my opinion, the problem of non-equivalence should not be discussed until the logically preceding issues, such as the above mentioned, have been explained and that is why the problem of non-equivalence is discussed as far as the last chapter.

The second part of the thesis is more practical; and therefore, more interesting for the reader. It is based on the comparison of the English book and its translation.

While comparing these two books, I found that the translator, Vladimír Medek, translated many expressions by the method of word-for-word translation. However, not every expression can be translated in this manner; therefore, the translator had to apply other translational methods and strategies, which are described in the analytical part of the thesis.

The most interesting cases are those, where the translator encountered words in the source language (English), which do not have their counterparts in the target language (Czech). Vladimír Medek solved this situation by using his imagination in order to invent completely new words, which are also mentioned in the analytical part.

To sum it up, the original book and its translation do not have to include the same words; however, they need to fulfil the same function. To achieve this, Vladimír Medek applied some of the translational methods and strategies; furthermore, he used his imagination for inventing new words. In my opinion, his translation is very satisfactory, because it remains close to the original purpose of the text and its cultural, historical and social background.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baker, Mona. *In Other Words. A Coursebook on translation*. London-new York: Routledge, 1992.

Knittlová, Dagmar. *K teorii i praxi řekladu*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2003.

Knittlová, Dagmar. *K pragmatickému aspektu překladu. Acta Univ. Car., Philologica 4-5, Slavica Pragensia 24*. Praha: UK, 1981.

Levý, Jiří. *Umění překladu*. Praha: Ivo Železný, 1998.

Kufnerová, Zlata, Milena Poláčková, Jaromír Povějšil, Zdena Skoumalová and Vlasta Straková. *Překládání a čeština*. Praha: H&H, 1994.

Mounin, Georges. *Teoretické problémy překladu*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, 1999.

Rowling, Joanne K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury, 2000.

Rowlingová, Joanne K. *Harry Potter a Kámen mudrců*. Translated by Vladimír Medek, Praha: Albatros, 2002.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

i.e.   This is/ this means.

etc.   And so on.

e.g.   For example.

vs.   Versus.

No.   Number.